

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, DA

SUBJ: DELAYS LIKELY IN FORMING NEW GOVT

REF: COPENHAGEN 3054 AND 3072

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH ANKER JORGEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVT RESIGNED
DECEMBER 5 AS RESULT OF GENERAL ELECTION DEFEAT, IT WILL CONTINUE
AS CARETAKER REGIME UNTIL NEW GOVT INSTALLED, AT THIS READING,
EITHER MODERATE LIBERAL LEADER POUL HARTLING OR RADICAL LIBERAL
LEADER BAUNSGAARD SEEM LIKELY TO GET FIRST SHOT AT FORMING NEW GOVT,
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ONCE PRELIMINARY MANEUVERINGS COMPLETED. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPARTMENT MIGHT FIND SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION USEFUL IN FOLLOWING WHAT COULD PROVE TO BE LONG DRAWN OUT PROCESS OF FINDING PARLIAMENTARY BASIS FOR NEW GOVT. UNDER DANISH PRACTICE, PRIME MINISTER OF OUTGOING GOVT CONTINUES HIS FUNCTIONS AS QUEEN'S PRIMARY ADVISOR ON FORMING NEW GOVT, INCLUDING RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL. ON BASIS HIS ADVICE, QUEEN MAY CONSULT LEADERS OF SOME OR ALL OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES TO DETERMINE TO WHOM ROLE OF FORMATEUR SHOULD BE PASSED IN SUCCEEDING PHASES. DESIGNATION AS FORMATEUR IS NOT A FORMAL ONE, BUT CONFERS EXCLUSIVE RIGHT FOR REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME TO NEGOTIATE ON FORMATION OF GOVT. LEADER OF LARGEST PARTY IN PARLIAMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY CHOSEN. DESIGNATION IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF PARTY LEADERS AS TO WHICH INDIVIDUAL HAS BEST CHANCE OF FORMING VIABLE GOVT.

2. ANKER JORGENSEN PRESENTED HIS GOVT'S RESIGNATION DECEMBER 5, BUT AT QUEEN'S REQUEST HE REMAINS IN OFFICE AS HEAD OF CARETAKER GOVT

AS CARETAKER, HIS GOVT WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE ABLE TO TAKE IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS WITHOUT VERY BROAD SUPPORTING CONSENSUS IN PARLIAMENT. IN VIEW OF LARGE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LOSS IN ELECTION, JORGENSEN DISCLAIMED INITIAL RIGHT TO ATTEMPT FORMATION OF NEW GOVT AND ADVISED QUEEN TO CONSULT LEADERS OF ALL PARTIES ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT. SHE COMPLETED THOSE CONSULTATIONS EVENING OF DECEMBER 6. AS THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS AMONG LEADERS ON POSSIBLE FORMATEUR, QUEEN HAS ASKED JORGENSEN TO LOOK INTO QUESTION FURTHER, WITH VIEW TO ADVISING HER ON POSSIBLE FORMATEUR.

3. AT PRESENT, MODERATE LIBERAL LEADER POUL HARTLING, WHO WAS FOREIGN MINISTER FROM 1968-1971, SEEMS MOST LIKELY RECIPIENT OF DIFFICULT MANDATE TO ASSEMBLE WORKABLE GOVT ALTHOUGH RADICAL LIBERAL HILMAR BAUSGAARD, PRIME MINISTER DURING THAT SAME PERIOD, IS ALSO A POSSIBILITY. AT THIS EARLY STAGE IN MANEUVERING, MANY OPTIONS ARE STILL OPEN BUT MINORITY GOVT LIMITED TO ONE OR BOTH OF THEIR PARTIES APPEARS TO HAVE BEST CHANCE OF GAINING GENERAL ACCEPTANCE. IN DANISH SYSTEM, OTHER PARTIES MAY GRANT SUCH A GOVT EITHER "PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT", AS SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY DID FOR OUTGOING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MINORITY GOVT, OR ENSURE IT OF "LOYAL OPPOSITION". IN LATTER CASE, NON-GOVERNING PARTIES WILL SUPPORT GOVT ON SPECIFIED ISSUES AND NOT ATTEMPT NEEDLESSLY TO BRING IT DOWN.

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BECAUSE OF CENTRIFUGAL FORCES EXERTED ON PARLIAMENT IN THIS ELECTION, AND COMPLEXITIES OF PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RIVALRIES INVOLVED, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE A SHORT-LIVED GOVT BASED ON TOLERANCE OF "LOYAL OPPOSITION" IS MOST THAT CAN BE EXPECTED.

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